

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

Please replace the sheet containing figure 5 with the attached replacement sheet.

The replacement sheet amends figure 5 by adding labels to components 508.

REMARKS

The Office action mailed April 17, 2006, objects to the drawings and rejects all the claims. The applicant respectfully requests reconsideration in light of the amendments and remarks presented in this reply.

I. Claims 54-56

The application as filed included claims 54-56. As the Office action does not refer to these claims, it appears that they were not considered. The applicant respectfully requests that these claims be considered. Additionally, the applicant notes that any rejections of claims 54-56 would be new rejections and, thus, would preclude making a further action final.

II. Response to drawing objections

The action objects to the drawings on the ground that reference character 100 is not mentioned in the description. In response, the applicant notes page 17, line 3. Additionally, this reply amends paragraph 68 to include character 100.

Additionally, the action objects to the drawings on the ground that element 508 of figure 5 is not labeled. This reply amends figure 5 in response to this objection.

III. Response to rejections

Claims 1-53 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 7,002,823 ("Ichiriu") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,842,359 ("Hata"). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 defines an apparatus comprising a circuit producing "an encoded CAM word such that a one-bit mismatch between a comparand and said incoming CAM word results in at least a M-bit mismatch between said encoded CAM word and a similarly encoded comparand". The cited prior art does not teach or suggest at least this limitation.

The applicant notes that no portion of the Office action mentions this limitation of claim 1. As such, it appears that this limitation was not considered during the examination. The applicant requests that this limitation be considered.

Ichiriu does not disclose any features comparable to the above-quoted limitation of claim 1. Ichiriu discloses a CAM system. The system of Ichiriu includes various features such as a simultaneous write and compare function (see the abstract) and features pertaining to error checking (see col. 5, ll. 1-14). However, nowhere does Ichiriu teach or suggest "an encoded CAM word such that a one-bit mismatch between a comparand and said incoming CAM word results in at least a M-bit mismatch between said encoded CAM word and a similarly encoded comparand".

Hata also does not disclose this limitation of claim 1. Hata teaches improving power consumption in a CAM system by adjusting various operating voltages in the system. For example, an embodiment taught by Hata includes at least two modes for changing an internal voltage generated by an internal voltage generation circuit (col. 6, ll. 1-10). None of these teachings in Hata relate to the above-quoted limitation of claim 1.

As neither Ichiriu nor Hata teach any feature comparable to "an encoded CAM word such that a one-bit mismatch between a comparand and said incoming CAM word results in at least a M-bit mismatch between said encoded CAM word and a similarly encoded comparand", the combination of Ichiriu and Hata also does not render claim 1 unpatentable.

Regarding claims 14, 29, 30, 31 and 43, each one of these claims is allowable at least because each one includes a limitation comparable to the limitation of claim 1 discussed above. Claims 2-13, 15-28, 32-42, and 44-53 are patentable at least because each one of these claims depends from an allowable claim.

Further regarding the rejections, although the rejections describe numerous components of Ichiriu and Hata, nowhere do the rejections explain how the examiner

feels these components correspond to the various limitations of the claims. If the examiner continues to make these rejections, the applicant requests the examiner to articulate how each limitation of the claims associates with the various components of Ichiriu and Hata.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the above amendment, the applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance. If there are any formal matters remaining after this reply, the applicant respectfully requests the examiner to telephone the undersigned. If there are any additional fees associated with the filing of this reply, including fees required under 35 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17, please charge them to deposit account no. 04-1073.

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Respectfully submitted,

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